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It's All About Mary

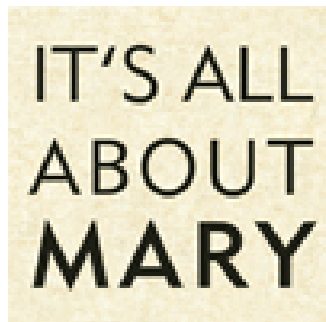
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It's All About Mary

09.18.2013 | Fine Arts, Catholic, Campus and Community It started with the gift of a single book in 1943.

In the 70 years since, the University of Dayton's Marian Library/International Marian Research Institute (IMRI) has grown into the world's largest repository of books and artifacts devoted to Mary, the mother of Christ, and a pontifical center of research and scholarship with a vast presence in cyberspace.

The Marian Library will commemorate that anniversary with an exhibit celebrating the library's past, present and future. "It's All about Mary" includes three separate exhibits and will be on display Oct. 18 through Nov. 15, on the first, second and seventh floors of Roesch Library. The exhibits on the first and second floors are open when Roesch Library is open; for hours call 937-229-4221. Marian Library gallery hours are 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, and Saturday and Sunday by appointment by calling 937-229-4214. All exhibits are free and open to the public.

"The Marian Library was founded not only as a symbol of devotion to the Virgin Mary, but also in response to the needs of the time," said the Rev. Thomas Thompson, S.M., who has directed the library for more than a quarter century. "In its earliest days, the library proposed simply to identify the location of Marian books and gradually has developed its own collection, now recognized as the world's largest collection of Marian materials.

"The educational dimension began with workshops and summer institutes and has developed into a pontifical theological faculty granting advanced degrees in theology — all in response to the needs of the Church," he said.

The current collection includes an estimated 80,000 books, 70,000 clippings, 20,000 holy cards, 12,000 postcards, more than 3,000 Nativity sets plus hundreds of rosaries, statues, badges, souvenirs, film and other items related in some way to Mary.

Materials can be found in more than 50 languages, not including one holding that offers versions of the Hail Mary in more than 150 languages, ranging from the historic (ancient Assyrian), obscure (Belandá Vri) and ubiquitous (Chinese, Arabic, English).

The library's website, The Mary Page, was established in 1996 and is one of the earliest religious studies resources on the Internet. Last year, an estimated 137,500 visitors accessed 470,000 page views in seven different languages.

Within its 7,000 pages of content, visitors can explore Marian apparitions throughout history, make a personal request for prayer through the Prayer Corner, learn how to plant a Mary Garden or discover anything about any aspect of Mary.

The exhibit on Roesch Library's second floor will explore the Marian Library's past and include such items such as "Devotion to Mary in the Twentieth Century," donated by then-University president, the Rev. John Elbert, S.M., in 1943 to start the library. That first modest gift led the way to major acquisitions of books, artwork and artifacts as well as the founding of the International Marian Research Institute in 1975.

The exhibit on the seventh floor, "Beauty Given by Grace: The Biblical Prints of Sadao Watanabe," highlights the Marian Library's special strength in exploring the intersection of faith and culture through the work of a Japanese Christian artist.

Coinciding with this exhibit, three volumes of the St. John's Bible will be on display, along with enlarged reproductions of some of the hand-illuminated illustrations. St. John's Bible is the first handwritten, illuminated Bible commissioned by a Benedictine Abby in more than 500 years.

The University has established a fund to support the purchase of the St. John's Bible Heritage Edition, a seven-volume fine-art reproduction.

"The history and the beauty of the volumes can convey a message about the centrality of prayer in the monastic tradition and in the lives of religious people. The exquisite beauty of the calligraphy and the illustrations places the biblical message within a

context of human achievement, aspiration, and identity," said Kathy Webb, dean of University Libraries.

The library will have several special events in conjunction with the exhibit. All events are free and open to the public. For more information on the events, including parking, visit the exhibit website

at http://www.udayton.edu/libraries/events/all_about_mary.php (url: http://www.udayton.edu/libraries/events/all_about_mary.php)

- Opening reception and talk by the Rev. Thomas Thompson, S.M., director of the Marian Library since 1987. 4:30 to 6 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 22, second floor, Roesch Library.
- "The Word of God Alive on Page: The Making of the Saint John's Bible," a lecture by the Rev. Eric Hollas, O.S.B., monk and priest of Saint John's Abbey, who was instrumental in initiating the 15-year project to create the handwritten, illuminated Bible. 3 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 3, first floor Roesch Library.
- "The Calligraphy of the Saint John's Bible," a lecture by Dayton artist, designer and calligrapher John Emery. 3-5 p.m. Friday, Nov. 8, Studio 042, lower level Roesch Library.

For more information, contact Cilla Shindell, director of media relations, at 937-229-3257 or shindell@udayton.edu (url: <mailto:shindell@udayton.edu>) .